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Smokejumper Obituary: Sylvester, Vernon Eugene (Missoula 1947)

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Smokejumper Obituary

Sylvester, Vernon Eugene (Missoula 1947)

Vern, 87, died June 18, 2011, in Stevensville, Montana. He was born May 29, 1924, near Lewistown. He attended a one-room school house up Cottonwood Creek where the family homesteaded and graduated from Fergus County High School.

He earned a degree in Forestry in 1950 from the University of Montana following a five-year stint in the U.S. Navy, which he joined shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. As a part of his assignment, Vern tested radar in airplanes to detect German submarines off the East Coast.

Vern jumped at Missoula in 1947-48 before embarking on a 30-year career with the U.S. Forest Service, from which he retired in 1980. Vern traveled to Russia, Africa, South America, China, Mongolia, Mexico, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. He was zealous in his care for the environment and was a member of several conservation organizations.

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